



AUSTRALIAN STATISTICS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Annual Report
2003–04

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The Hon. Ross Cameron, MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer

I have pleasure in submitting the Report of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council for the year ended 30 June 2004.

The Report outlines the work undertaken by the Council and is submitted to you for presentation to Parliament under sub-section 24(2) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*.

The Report is dated on the day I approved the finalised text for printing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sandra Harding". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Professor Sandra Harding
Chairperson

27 September 2004

Australian Statistics Advisory Council

Mission

To ensure that, in keeping with Council's statutory charter, the advice furnished to the Minister and the Statistician in relation to the collection and dissemination of statistics has due regard to relative priorities, is objective, relevant, timely, constructive and practical, and that it is sensitive to the needs of both suppliers and users of statistical data.

FOREWORD

The role of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC) is to provide advice to the Government through the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer and to the Australian Statistician. In a year where the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has been and will continue to be under financial pressure the importance of sound advice on statistical priorities is even more critical.

A key focus of Council during 2003-04 has been consideration of the difficulties confronting the ABS in responding to the increasing statistical demands of government and society within a budget that has been slowly declining in real terms. While Council has assisted ABS in determining priorities within those financial constraints, Council was very much of the view that in the increasingly complex society we live in, information needs will inevitably increase, and the ABS has a pivotal role in ensuring a national statistical service that can respond to those needs. Council has encouraged ABS to seek additional Government funding so as to expand the statistical service and in particular enhance its statistical coordination role through the national statistical service and other initiatives.

ASAC has provided advice to ABS on a range of key economic and social issues including content of the 2006 Population Census, development of the National Statistical Service, ageing statistics, social capital and wellbeing, and nonprofit institutions. These and other issues are discussed in more detail in chapter 2. For two of these topics - wellbeing and nonprofit institutions - expert speakers were invited to address Council. Their presence added considerably to the discussion and ASAC welcomes the continued use of such experts.

ASAC has been particularly supportive in recent years of the development by ABS of measures or indicators of national progress. With this in mind I would like to offer my congratulations to Mr Dennis Trewin, Australian Statistician, who was recognised by the Bulletin magazine for the significant contribution of the ABS to Australian life through winning the society category in its Smart 100 Awards for the development and publication of Measuring Australia's Progress.

Two new members joined ASAC in 2003-04. I would like to welcome Dr Adam Graycar and Mr George Tomlins. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to non-returning Council members Ms Christine Bierbaum and Dr Michael Kirby for their contribution to ASAC.

It is with regret that I advise of the passing in 2003-04 of Dr Lisa Brodribb and Ms Yvonne Bain, both previous Council members. Dr Brodribb, had been a member of Council from 1977 to 1995 and Chairperson of Council from 1981 to 1986, while Ms Bain, had been a member of Council from 1980 to 1995.

I would like to convey my appreciation to Mr Dennis Trewin, Australian Statistician and his team for their positive approach to ASAC and to the advice provided. I would also like to record Council's thanks to Mr Rob Edwards, former Deputy Australian Statistician, for his valued input to Council deliberations over many years. Finally my thanks to Ms Marion McEwin for her assistance during her time as Council Secretary and welcome to Ms Teresa Dickinson as the new Council Secretary.

I trust you find the report informative.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sandra Harding". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Professor Sandra Harding
Chairperson

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Note: In this Report, after the first reference, the Australian Statistics Advisory Council is referred to as ASAC or the Council, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics as the ABS or the Bureau.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Australian Statistics Advisory Council was established by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*.

Under subsection 18(1) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* the Council is to advise the Minister and the Australian Statistician on:

- "(a) the improvement, extension and co-ordination of statistical services provided for public purposes in Australia;*
- (b) annual and longer term priorities and programs of work that should be adopted in relation to major aspects of the provision of those statistical services; and*
- (c) any other matters relating generally to those statistical services."*

The Act enables the Minister or the Australian Statistician to seek the advice of the Council on these matters. The Council also offers advice on these matters to the Minister or the Australian Statistician when it considers it appropriate to do so.

The Act provides that the Council shall consist of a part-time Chairperson, the Australian Statistician (ex officio), and between ten and twenty-two part-time members, including one nominee of each state premier and the chief ministers of the two territories. The Chairperson and members are appointed by the responsible Minister for periods of five years and up to three years respectively, and are eligible for reappointment. The membership of Council as at 30 June 2004 is detailed at Appendix 1.

Subsection 24(2) of the Act provides that: "the Council shall, as soon as practicable after 30 June in each year, prepare and submit to the Minister, for presentation to the Parliament, a report relating to matters connected with the operation of this Act".

Council generally meets twice a year. Where appropriate, experts in a particular field are invited to attend for relevant agenda items. In addition to the meetings, Council has a web-based discussion forum which enables regular interaction between members.

2. SUMMARY OF YEAR'S ACTIVITIES

During 2003-04, Council held two meetings, on 5 November 2003 and 25 May 2004. The full agendas for the meetings are provided at Appendix 2.

Key issues considered by Council during the year included:

- ABS Forward Work Program 2004-05 to 2006-07
- 2006 Population Census Planning
- Development of the National Statistical Service
- Issues in Ageing Statistics
- Social Capital
- Measuring Wellbeing and Progress
- Innovation and the Knowledge Based Economy
- Nonprofit Institutions Sector
- Tourism Statistics

2.1 ABS Forward Work Program 2004-05 to 2006-07

A key function of Council is to provide advice on current and emerging statistical priorities for the ABS forward work program. At both the November and May meetings the ABS presented to Council papers relating to its forward work program. A recurring theme in these discussions was the tight financial situation confronting the ABS over the triennial planning period and the very limited scope for new development work.

Council was further informed that in the absence of additional funding the ABS is likely to need to reduce its current work program to ensure that core statistics can continue to be produced to an appropriate quality standard.

Council's view is that it is imperative that the ABS expand its work program and role to meet emerging needs as it has the necessary expertise and infrastructure to ensure a coordinated national statistical service that can respond to the increasing information needs of government and the community. Council strongly encouraged the ABS to seek further budget appropriations from government so it could adequately fulfil its functions.

Within this context Council supported the proposed additions to the three year work program presented for consideration at the November meeting. The key proposals were:

- the establishment of a Demography Methods Unit to increase the research and development work relating to population estimates
- increased resources for the development and implementation of international standards for key macro-economic statistics
- improved agricultural and environment statistics including the conduct of an annual survey for the collection of environmental data relating to the agricultural sector
- the development and conduct of a Personal Safety Survey to assess the extent and nature of violence at home and in the community
- the development and conduct of an Australian component of the internationally coordinated Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey to provide a national profile of the Australians' literacy skills.

Council noted that both the Personal Safety Survey and the Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey would be partly funded by other government agencies.

Council was also asked to consider some possible cutbacks in the work program including a reduction in the frequency of the average weekly earnings (AWE) collection from quarterly to biannual. ASAC had concerns regarding such a proposal due to the extensive use of AWE in legislation and contractual obligations. Given the concern expressed by members the Australian Statistician indicated that he would maintain the current quarterly frequency for this collection. Nevertheless the discussion was useful in highlighting the dilemma facing the ABS in terms of trying to identify existing work program that may be ceased to make way for new statistical initiatives.

At the May meeting Council noted that to ensure a satisfactory budgetary outcome for 2004-05 some proposed new statistical work may need to be deferred in addition to reductions in administrative and support activities.

Members discussed the relative priorities of a number of proposed statistical projects including additional work on nonprofit institutions statistics; establishment of a National Centre for Environment Statistics; continued development of National Statistical Service (NSS) initiatives; and investigatory work on census data linking. In general, members indicated that the 2001 Census data linking project was the highest priority, whilst of the options listed, further work on nonprofit institutions statistics was the lowest priority.

2.2 2006 Population Census Planning

At both the November and May meetings Council considered ABS papers regarding the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. Discussion focussed primarily on the proposed topics for inclusion in the census.

While Council agreed with the ABS priority ranking of new topics, there was some disappointment that a question on unpaid work could not be accommodated without increasing the size of the census form by another page. Council was advised that an extra page would not unduly impact on data quality but would require an additional \$3 million to process. While Council is very cognisant of the reporting workload associated with the Census, the general view was that information from the census on unpaid work would be of considerable value. Council encouraged the ABS to seek additional funding to support the collection of these statistics in the coming census.

2.3 Development of the National Statistical Service

In recent years ABS has been discussing and developing the concept of a National Statistical Service (NSS) with a wide range of stakeholders. The NSS initiative recognises the extensive data holdings and statistical information already contained in the administrative systems of federal, state and local government organisations and provides a framework for improved quality, accessibility and utilisation of that information. It also recognises that increasingly agencies are producing statistical information for performance monitoring, and program and policy development and evaluation, a potential information base which needs to be better tapped.

Council considers the NSS to be a major initiative and strongly supports it, as the ultimate outcome will be a greatly increased range of information for informed decision making. In supporting the NSS, Council recognises that implementation of the NSS is likely to vary between the Australian and state/territory government agencies and from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

The ABS was encouraged to undertake some pilot projects with selected Australian and state/territory government agencies to maintain momentum for the initiative and demonstrate the value of the proposal.

During 2003-04 Council was kept informed and welcomed a number of significant developments in respect of the NSS. A particularly well received initiative was the concept of a National Data Network (NDN) which is envisaged to provide a range of data network services through a central website, as a major infrastructure component of the NSS. Members considered that there is a compelling need for the ABS to continue to take a lead role in developing the NDN and NSS.

2.4 Issues in Ageing Statistics

Understanding Australia's ageing population has been and continues to be a high priority issue for ASAC. At the November meeting Council considered an ABS paper which addressed some of the big policy questions in respect of ageing and identified the data sources currently available that would inform those questions.

The paper presented to Council identified four key policy themes:

- i. labour force participation
- ii. retirement and transition to retirement
- iii. health and care costs
- iv. social and community impacts of ageing.

Council largely endorsed the themes identified as being the key policy issues. It was noted that in order to adequately answer the questions identified there would be a need for some adjustment to existing ABS data collections.

2.5 Social Capital

In recent years ASAC members have brought the importance of social capital and the need for statistical information on this topic to the attention of the ABS. The topic has increasingly become an area of great interest to a large number of government, community and research organisations, with recognition of its positive contribution to a range of social concerns.

At the May meeting Council considered a paper which identified a range of policy issues relating to social capital, described the Social Capital Framework developed by ABS, and explored some of the data issues relating to the framework.

While recognising the difficulties in defining exactly what social capital represents and the data needed to measure it, Council noted its importance from a policy perspective in trying to understand why some communities function better than others. In particular, Council considered that the Social Capital Framework was a very valuable document to assist government agencies in assessing the issue.

The ABS was encouraged to continue its work in this field and to explore/examine the scope for addressing social capital issues at the community level. In particular Council noted and welcomed the results from the ABS General Social Survey which explored a number of issues relevant to social capital. However, Council also cautioned against pursuing an extensive data collection program, noting that the current investment of resources was appropriate.

2.6 Measuring Wellbeing and Progress

The inclusion of this item on the agenda during 2003-04 reflects the continuing interest of Council in developing a better understanding of, and measuring the concepts of, wellbeing and progress for the Australian community. At the May meeting Council was presented with two papers:

- i. *Policy Advice and Treasury's Wellbeing Framework* prepared by the Commonwealth Department of the Treasury
- ii. *Approaches to Measuring Wellbeing and Progress* prepared by ABS.

Both papers highlighted the complexities associated with defining and measuring the concepts of wellbeing and progress.

Council noted that the ABS' statistical framework for measuring wellbeing, the indicators used in the recently released ABS publication *Measures of Australia's Progress* and the Treasury's Wellbeing framework were each designed with different purposes in mind. Nevertheless they all contribute to an enhanced public discussion on Australia's progress and the wellbeing of the community.

Council especially welcomed the Treasury framework as a very positive development which demonstrated how economic analysis is broadening to explicitly recognise the social and environmental dimensions, as well as the economic dimension. The framework is a valuable tool in providing a transparent and explicit guide to the issues that might be considered in developing policy advice, and identifying the important trade-offs for wellbeing.

At the same time Council strongly supported the continued evolution of the Bureau's work on *Measures of Australia's Progress*, noting the substantial positive feedback that had been received on the recent publication.

2.7 Innovation and the Knowledge Based Economy

In recent years Council has drawn attention to the importance of information on the Knowledge Based Economy and innovation in the Australian economy. Council members commended the recently developed ABS framework for compiling Knowledge Based Economy/Society indicators, and in particular welcomed the continual updating of this experimental framework on the ABS web site as new/updated observations become available.

Whilst acknowledging the difficulties in delineating the appropriate indicators for a knowledge based economy framework and the definitional issues associated with the concept of innovation, Council supported the development by ABS of an Innovation Survey which included a broad concept of innovation.

The possible linking of innovation activity and business performance measures through a proposed business longitudinal database was also welcomed as a significant development.

2.8 Nonprofit Institutions Sector

At the November 2003 meeting Council had a very useful discussion regarding the issue of nonprofit institutions and their role in society and the economy. Two experts in the field Prof. Mark Lyons (University of Technology Sydney) and Prof. Myles McGregor-Lowndes (Queensland University of Technology) were invited to present a paper and to join Council for discussion of the topic. Council also considered a paper prepared by the ABS on data collected about the nonprofit sector.

Discussion of this item highlighted the significant contribution of the sector to the economy and society in general. Council expressed the view that the nonprofit sector's increasingly important role in government service delivery and in developing social capital/cohesion make it imperative that more information in terms of size, nature and structure of the sector is made available.

The recent release by ABS of a satellite account for the sector was considered a progressive step. However, Council encouraged the ABS to take a leadership role in exploring the possibilities for extending and increasing the data available for this important and growing sector.

2.9 Tourism Statistics

Following the release of the Government's Tourism White Paper in November 2003 which highlighted further information needed to support the tourism sector, Council examined the Bureau's directions in tourism statistics.

Whilst acknowledging that the ABS has historically provided a significant range of information relating to the tourism industry, Council noted the ABS initiatives proposed to address user's information needs. In particular Council supported ABS proposals for:

- the continued release of short term visitor arrival estimates
- the development of annual Tourism Satellite Accounts
- the expansion of the Survey of Tourist Accommodation
- the development of quarterly estimates of Tourism Gross Value Added
- the development of a Tourism Information Development Plan.

Council also noted that the ABS is working closely with Tourism White Paper Implementation Working Groups to help develop strategies and share responsibilities for future tourism statistics datasets.

3. THE YEAR AHEAD

Given the continuing financial constraints applying to the ABS, 2004-05 will undoubtedly be a challenging year for the ABS. In that environment the role of ASAC in advising the Statistician and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer on statistical priorities for the ABS will be paramount.

As such, the ABS forward work program will continue to be the key consideration for Council. In that regard Council is very cognisant of the demands on the ABS for new or better statistics on a wide range of topics to help shed light on difficult and complex issues. Topics of interest will continue to be issues such as ageing population, social capital and well being, the environment and factors influencing productivity. To address these demands the ABS will have to continue to identify and explore ways of working smarter. However, as noted elsewhere, it is Council's view that such initiatives are likely to only partly address the demands, and Council considers that there is a good case to be made for additional budgetary appropriation to the ABS so as to better address the legitimate needs of users.

In terms of working smarter, an important issue for the ABS in 2004-05, and one in which Council will take a keen interest, will be the further development and implementation of the National Statistical Service (NSS). Council has been a strong proponent of the NSS and while there may be some high up-front costs it has the potential to greatly increase the longer term statistical base through coordinating and harnessing the rich administrative datasets and statistical effort of other agencies. A particular development, the National Data Network, which commenced to take shape in 2003-04 and is envisaged as a major supporting infrastructure for the NSS will be a topic of interest to Council in 2004-05. ABS efforts to obtain stakeholder support and establish key partnerships will also be closely monitored by Council.

In 2004-05, Council will continue to provide advice in relation to the Bureau's major statistical collection activity, the Census of Population and Housing, and in particular will review the proposed Census Output Strategy. Particular aspects of interest to Council will be the strategy for disseminating census information via the ABS website and the developments and scope for additional flexibility of output data using geo-referencing and Mesh Blocks, a geographical unit smaller than the current census collection district. Council also notes that the possibility of linking census data to other data has been canvassed in *ABS Views on Content and Procedure* and that investigations and focus group testing of community acceptance are currently being undertaken. Council looks forward to considering the outcomes of those investigations and the resulting ABS proposals. A key factor recognised by both ABS and Council in considering this issue in 2003-04 was the need for transparency of procedures and protocols.

APPENDIX 1

MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL AND ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Membership of Council at 30 June 2004 and Date of Initial Appointment

Member	Position	Date first appointed
Prof. Sandra Harding	Deputy Vice Chancellor International and Development Queensland University of Technology	01.03.02
Mr Dennis Trewin	Australian Statistician (ex officio)	05.07.00
Dr Peter Crossman	Assistant Under Treasurer and Queensland Government Statistician Office of Economic and Statistical Research Queensland Treasury	11.03.99
Prof. Peter Dawkins	Director and Ronald Henderson Professor Melbourne Institute of Applied Economics and Social Research The University of Melbourne	01.04.99(a)
Mr Clem Doherty	Chairman Like Minded Individuals Pty Ltd	01.05.97(b)
Dr Adam Graycar	Director Cabinet Office South Australia	01.12.03
Mr Peter Horn	Director Fiscal Strategy New South Wales Treasury	01.05.03
Ms Betty Hounslow	General Manager Operations The Fred Hollows Foundation	01.05.97(b)
Mr Wayne Jackson	Deputy Secretary Department of Family and Community Services Canberra	01.03.02
Mr Peter Jones	Senior Economic Consultant Dept of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment Northern Territory	01.03.03
Dr Steven Kates	Chief Economist Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry	01.09.91(c)

Mr Chris Lock	Director Economic Policy Department of Treasury and Finance Tasmania	01.06.02
Mr Haydn Lowe	Partner Blue Lagoon Pearls	01.04.03
Ms Anne Nolan	Coordinator of Energy Office of Energy Western Australia	01.02.02
Dr Martin Parkinson	Executive Director Macroeconomic Group Department of the Treasury Canberra	01.03.02
Prof. Fiona Stanley AC	Director Telethon Institute for Child Health Research	01.04.03
Ms Louise Sylvan	Deputy Chair Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	01.03.02
Mr George Tomlins	Executive Director Shaping Our Territory Implementation Group Chief Minister's Department Australian Capital Territory	01.07.03

- (a) Membership expired at 31 March 2002, however attended subsequent Council meetings as an observer until formally reappointed 1 April 2003.
- (b) Membership expired at 30 April 2000, however attended subsequent Council meetings as an observer until formally reappointed 1 March 2002.
- (c) Membership expired at 31 August 2000, however attended subsequent Council meetings as an observer until formally reappointed 1 March 2002.

Changes in Membership Since 30 June 2003

1 July 2003	Appointment of Mr George Tomlins
30 November 2003	Ms Christine Bierbaum's term of appointment expired
1 December 2003	Appointment of Dr Adam Graycar
10 May 2004	Dr Michael Kirby resigned

Meetings of Council 2003–04

5 November 2003

25 May 2004

Attendance at Meetings

		Attendance
Chairperson	Prof. Sandra Harding	2
Australian Statistician	Mr Dennis Trewin	2
State/Territory Representatives		
South Australia	Ms Christine Bierbaum	1
	Dr Adam Graycar	1
Queensland	Dr Peter Crossman	2
New South Wales	Mr Peter Horn	2
Northern Territory	Mr Peter Jones	0
	Prof. Tony Barnes(a)	2
Victoria	Dr Michael Kirby	0
	Mr Vin Martin(b)	1
Tasmania	Mr Chris Lock	1
	Mr Greg Philp(c)	1
Western Australia	Ms Anne Nolan	0
	Mr David Smith(d)	2
Australian Capital Territory	Mr George Tomlins	0
	Mr Andrew Rice(e)	2
Other Members		
	Prof. Peter Dawkins	2
	Mr Clem Doherty	1
	Ms Betty Hounslow	1
	Mr Wayne Jackson	2
	Dr Steven Kates	2
	Mr Haydn Lowe	1
	Dr Martin Parkinson	1
	Dr Jim Hagan(f)	1
	Prof. Fiona Stanley	1
	Ms Louise Sylvan	0

(a) Attended as proxy for Mr Peter Jones.

(b) Attended as Victorian Government representative.

(c) Attended as proxy for Mr Chris Lock.

(d) Attended as proxy for Ms Anne Nolan.

(e) Attended as proxy for Mr George Tomlins.

(f) Attended as proxy for Dr Martin Parkinson.

APPENDIX 2

AGENDAS FOR ASAC MEETINGS

5 November 2003 Meeting - Agenda

1. **Summary record of previous meeting**
Paper: Summary record of 29 May 2003 meeting.
2. **Chairperson's Report**
Verbal report
3. **Statistician's Report**
Verbal report
4. **ABS Forward Work Program**
Paper: Future directions for ABS' statistical work program
5. **2006 Census Developments**
Paper: Content and Procedures for the 2006 Census of Population and Housing
6. **Issues in Ageing Statistics**
Paper: Addressing the big questions on ageing
7. **National Statistical Service**
Paper: Update on development and implementation of the National Statistical Service
8. **Knowledge Based Economy and Society**
Paper: Understanding the impacts of innovation through links to performance measures
9. **Nonprofit Institutions Sector**
Paper: Nonprofit Institutions in ABS Statistics
Paper: Improving Data on Australia's Nonprofit Institutions: A Role for the ABS

25 May 2004 Meeting - Agenda

1. **Summary record of previous meeting**
Paper: Summary record of 5 November 2003 meeting.
2. **Chairperson's report**
Verbal report
3. **Statistician's Report**
Verbal report
4. **ABS Forward Work Program**
Paper: a) New Policy Proposal
b) Forward Work Program
5. **2006 Census Developments**
Paper: Update on Content and Procedures for the 2006 Census of Population and Housing
6. **Social Capital**
Paper: Social Capital
7. **Measuring Wellbeing**
Paper: Issues in Understanding Wellbeing
Paper: Approaches to Measuring Wellbeing and Progress
8. **Developments in Tourism Statistics**
Paper: Developments in Tourism Statistics
9. **IDP stocktake**
Paper: Stocktake of Information Development Plans

APPENDIX 3

INVOLVEMENT OF ASAC MEMBERS IN OTHER ABS ACTIVITIES / USER GROUPS

ASAC Member	Committee / Group / Activity
Dr Peter Crossman	Queensland State Statistical Consultative Committee
Mr Peter Horn	New South Wales Statistical Coordination and User Forum Economic Statistics User Group ABS@NSW Government Implementation Steering Committee
Mr Peter Jones	Northern Territory Statistical Liaison Committee
Dr Steven Kates	Labour Statistics Advisory Group Economic Statistics User Group
Dr Michael Kirby	Victorian Statistics Advisory Committee Victorian Economic Statistics Subcommittee Economic Statistics User Group
Mr Chris Lock	Tasmanian Statistical Policy Committee
Dr Adam Graycar	South Australian Statistical Policy Group South Australian Government Agencies Statistical Committee
Mr Clem Doherty	Information and Communication Technology Reference Group

APPENDIX 4

OPERATION OF ASAC

The Australian Statistics Advisory Council was established by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*.

The Chairperson of the Council receives an annual fee, set by the Remuneration Tribunal, and members are reimbursed their travel costs, where applicable. Apart from the Chairperson, no members receive remuneration for serving on the Council. Direct expenditure on ASAC during 2003-04 was \$63,145. These costs are met from the ABS budget.

Secretariat services for ASAC are provided by the ABS. The office of ASAC Secretary is held by the Assistant Statistician of the Policy Secretariat Branch of the ABS. Secretariat support provided by the ABS includes organising and recording of meetings, administering membership and the members' online Discussion Forum, and the preparation of Council's Annual Report. The cost of these services was estimated to be \$72,967 during 2003-04.

APPENDIX 5

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATEMENT

Below is a statement, as required by section 8 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, about the structure of ASAC and how members of the public can obtain access to information held by it.

Establishment, organisation and functions

See Chapter 1 (page 1).

Powers

As an advisory body, ASAC has no decision-making or other powers directly affecting members of the public. It does not administer any enactments or schemes.

Arrangements for outside participation

ASAC members are appointed by the Minister responsible for the ABS so that a broad range of views and interests is reflected in the advice that it offers to the Minister and the Statistician. Membership details are given on pages 9-10.

Persons or bodies outside the Australian Government administration may participate in the Council's policy formulation by making representations to the Minister or the Chairperson on matters of concern to them.

Categories of documents

The ASAC Annual Report, which is tabled in Parliament, is available from all ABS offices. Files are maintained which contain documents relating to the administration of the Council, papers discussed at Council meetings, summary records of proceedings of meetings and correspondence relating to the activities of the Council.

FOI procedures and initial contact points

All inquiries concerning access to documents, including inquiries under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, may be directed on weekdays, between 8.30 am and 4.30 pm, to the Secretary, Australian Statistics Advisory Council, c/- Australian Bureau of Statistics, 45 Benjamin Way, Belconnen, ACT 2617 - telephone (02) 6252 5533.

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